City of Santa Barbara

CREEKS RESTORATION AND WATER QUALITY IMPROVEMENT CITIZENS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, March 15, 2006

M I N U T E S

The regular meeting of the Creeks Restoration and Water Quality Improvement Program Citizens Advisory Committee was called to order by Chair DeVoe at 5:36 p.m. at the David Gebhard Public Meeting Room.

1. CALL TO ORDER

2. ROLL CALL

Members Present

Myfanwy DeVoe (Chair)	Environmental/Land Use
Daniel E. Hochman	Hotel/Lodging Industry
Michael Jordan (Vice Chair)	Business Community
Bruce Klobucher	Ocean Users
Jeff Phillips	Environmental/Land Use
David Pritchett	Environmental/Land Use
George Weber	Environmental/Land Use
Daniel Wilson	Community at Large

Liaison Representatives Present

Beebe Longstreet	Park and Recreation Commission

Liaison Representatives Absent

Rob Almy	County Project Clean Water Liaison
Iya Falcone	City Council Liaison
John Jostes	Planning Commission Liaison

Staff Present

Jill E. Zachary	Creeks Restoration/Clean Water Manager
Jill L.S. Murray	Creeks Water Quality Project Coordinator
Tim Burgess	Creeks Water Quality Monitor

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF FEBRUARY 15, 2006.

ACTION:

Hochman moved, seconded by Pritchett, and passed 7/0 that the Committee approve the minutes of the regular meeting of February 15, 2006. Wilson abstained.

4. AGENDA ADJUSTMENTS

None.

5. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Phillips reported that the site visit to the Arroyo Burro Estuary and Mesa Creek Restoration Project was interesting and much of the non-native vegetation was cleared in order to grow native plant species.

Mr. Pritchett reported that the Steelhead Festival was held at the Santa Barbara Zoo and co-sponsored by the City of Santa Barbara.

7. BUSINESS ITEMS

a. Water Quality Monitoring Program Update

Ms. Jill Murray, Creeks Water Quality Project Coordinator, gave a review of the water quality monitoring program. She said that in 2001 the program focus was on indicator bacteria, monitoring locations, and determining the extent of the water quality problem. She said that the monitoring program included storm monitoring, creek walks, and biological assessment. She said that in 2004, the program was expanded to include project assessment, additional storm monitoring, DNA-based microbial source tracking, and land-use based monitoring.

Ms. Murray stated that the monitoring program goals are to determine the levels of pollutants in the creeks and ocean, and assess the ability of restoration and water quality projects to reduce pollutants. She said that the purpose of monitoring is to identify needs in order to prioritize future projects as provide the public with information about water quality.

Ms. Murray said that the monitoring program elements include: 1) routine watershed assessment, 2) storm monitoring, 3) microbial source tracking research, 4) restoration project and water quality treatment project assessment, 5) biological assessment, 6) creek walks, and 7) special studies. She said that the Creeks Division monitors for microbial contamination, chemical constituents, and physicochemical properties such as dissolved oxygen, turbidity, temperature, conductivity, nutrients, oxygen demand, and suspended sediments. She said that

the physiochemical properties are used to assess water quality for aquatic organisms.

Ms. Murray summarized that there is a high variability in indicator bacteria seasonally and yearly. She said that E. coli is the highest in Mission Creek and Enterococcus is highest in Laguna Channel. Ms. Murray stated that a long term change in water quality has not been detected.

Mr. Burgess, Creeks Water Quality Monitor, said that storm monitoring includes the monitoring of trace metals, herbicides, pesticides, hydrocarbons, and MBAS. He said that 19 sites are monitored. Mr. Burgess said that monitoring "triggers" have been established and that greater coverage has been attained when sampling by using the composite method, which means grouping samples from the same location, over time. Mr. Burgess stated that MBAS was also monitored in 2006.

Mr. Burgess summarized the results related to trace metals, herbicide, pesticides, and organic pollutants. He said that copper is the only dissolved metal that has exceeded the criteria. He said that glyphosate was detected twice but did not exceed the criteria and that pesticides have never been detected. Mr. Burgess said that MBAS was detected twice, and exceeded the criterion twice. He said that oil and grease were detected in approximately half of the samples.

Mr. Burgess stated that dissolved copper was the only constituent with consistent exceedances. He said that dissolved copper can be toxic to aquatic organisms and can come from brake pads, architectural features, or the erosion of minerals. He said that some evidence indicates that copper in storm water is not toxic to aquatic organisms and stated that the subject warrants further investigation.

Mr. Burgess stated that the next steps include a 5-Year Water Quality Report to be presented in June 2006. He said that this would be a comprehensive report including the additional sites, constituents, additional analyses, creek walk data, research on copper toxicity, and recommendations for future monitoring.

Committee Discussion:

Mr. Jordan asked which government agency determines whether a beach warning is posted. He asked why neighborhoods with runoff directly into the ocean are not currently monitored.

- Ms. Murray responded that County Environmental Health Services is responsible for beach monitoring and posting.
- Ms. Zachary responded that areas that drain directly into the ocean are not currently being monitored because the focus is on larger drainpipes and larger subwatersheds with known water quality problems.

Mr. Hochman recommended analyzing the monitoring results based on variables such as the day of week or holiday status.

- Ms. Murray responded that similar analysis will be undertaken but would not be exhaustive. She added that a USGS statistician is currently analyzing City creek data.

Mr. Wilson asked what constitutes composite sampling and how it is known whether or not the hydrograph is rising or falling. Mr. Wilson asked if there is concern with copper testing.

- Mr. Burgess responded that samples from a specific location, over time, were combined and analyzed. He responded that the USGS gauges are used as well as basic field notes in order to determine whether the hydrograph is rising or falling.
- Ms. Murray responded that the benefit of composite sampling is that it is a means to optimize research based on the questions that are to be answered. She said that the goal of this monitoring was to determine whether or not constituents such as herbicides and pesticides are running into the creeks and ocean in storms other than the season's first flush. Ms. Murray responded that the copper that is currently tested for may not be toxic or bio-accessible and that a more appropriate test is currently being researched.

Mr. Pritchett asked which sampling method is used by the City and why there is no data for the January storms of 2005.

- Ms. Murray responded that the total coliform data is in the preliminary summary. She said that the City does not collect data on the fecal coliform group. Ms. Murray stated that the City uses the single sample maximum and stated that staff was unavailable for monitoring during the January 2005 storm.

Mr. Klobucher asked how the public can volunteer for Storm Catchers. He asked how DNA background information would affect the City's current efforts.

- Mr. Burgess responded that the public can find volunteer information at www.sbcreeks.com.
- Ms. Murray responded that DNA information would enable staff to know if the bacteria within the creeks are coming from human or animal intestinal sources. She said that if human waste is found, then it is more likely that pathogens are present.

Mr. Phillips asked if the composite sampling results have been presented.

- Ms. Murray responded that the results were not presented but are folded into the summary tables and included in the water quality report.

Mr. Weber asked how the City determines if it has caught the "first flush."

- Ms. Murray responded that the first quarter inch of rain is the "first flush" of a storm and that there is also a "first flush" storm, which is generally the first storm of the season.

Public Comment Opened at 6:47 p.m.

Mr. Tim Higman asked if the water from the springs in Veronica Spring include dissolved solids that are detrimental to the fish in Arroyo Burro.

- Mr. Burgess responded that the spring was tested and would be assessed in the near future.

Ms. Kira Schmidt, Channelkeeper, asked if the water quality data would be forwarded to the Regional Water Quality Control Board and asked what the Creeks Division intends to do with the data.

- Ms. Murray responded that the data will be sent to the RWQCB and that the data is used to determine the location, priority, and efficacy of water quality improvement projects.
- Ms. Zachary responded that the goal of the 5-year water quality monitoring report is to analyze the data collected in order to determine Best Management Practices directly related to local water quality issues.

Public Comment Closed at 6:55 p.m.

Committee Discussion:
Mr. Pritchett recommended that staff test for the bi-products of glyphosate. He recommended that the City create a comprehensive plan for the Veronica Springs area.

Mr. Weber asked if sediment sampling has been considered.

- Ms. Murray responded that staff has discussed sediment sampling.

Mr. Wilson said that he is concerned with the sampling methods used and that the methodology has changed. He recommended that the City rent automated sampling machinery.

- Ms. Murray responded that it would be advantageous for staff and interested Committee members meet to discuss the issues that Mr. Wilson has brought up. She said that, in consultation with Tim Robinson, it was determined that composite sampling, as it was carried out, would work best to answer the pesticide/herbicide question.
- Mr. Burgess responded that auto samplers have not been used because monitoring sites change and the monitoring program is adaptive.

Mr. Phillips recommended that the water quality monitoring data be stored in a GIS database. He stated that he is also concerned with composite sampling methods and recommended the use of laboratories that are not EPA certified to reduce lab costs. Mr. Phillips said that glyphosate is non-toxic and should only be monitored in the future if it is determined that glyphosate is toxic. Mr. Phillips asked why funds were put towards removing indicator bacteria in Old Mission Creek despite all of the uncertainties and its ability to grow in the natural environment.

- Ms. Murray responded that the primary goal of the Westside SURF project and Ultraviolet light treatment is to eliminate pathogens. She added that children play in the creek near the project site and the City has the capacity

to treat that water.

- Ms. Zachary responded that if the City were to receive grant funding for natural treatment of the creeks, then the Creeks Division would do natural treatment. She said that staff knows that the UV facility will eliminate pathogens in a public park where children play. She said that the UV facility was the most feasible solution.

Mr. Hochman said that he is concerned that the City is not monitoring the surf zone.

- Ms. Murray responded that the County monitors the surf zone and shares that data with the City. She said that the County monitors the surf zone on the same days that the City monitors the creeks.
- Ms. Zachary responded that the City mimicked the County's surf zone monitoring in 2003 with comparable results and as a result, the data is now shared.

Ms. DeVoe said that a Councilmember suggested using Measure B funds to educate the community on less-toxic herbicides and pesticides. She asked if there is anything that can be done about copper in the water.

- Ms. Zachary responded that the Creeks Division has allocated funds to herbicide/pesticide-use education.
- Ms. Murray responded that copper exceedances are common in areas with copper roofs. She also said that there is a non-profit organization focused on the reduction of copper in brake pads but there is a body of scientific research that says that brake pad copper is not creating toxic conditions.

Mr. Jordan recommended that the Creeks Division air informative screen shots on City TV during televised meetings, while Commission or Council members are on break. He also suggested that the web page be updated more frequently and suggested tracking hits. Mr. Jordan suggested using the email newsletter to build web page hits and suggested promoting the newsletter and website with large employers, industry associations, and homeowner associations.

b. Review of and Appointment to Subcommittees

Ms. DeVoe appointed Committee members to subcommittees as follows:

Strategic Planning Adhoc Subcommittee - Hochman, Klobucher, Phillips, Pritchett
Watershed Planning Adhoc Subcommittee – DeVoe, Phillips, Pritchett, Wilson
Budget Standing Subcommittee - DeVoe, Hochman, Pritchett

Mr. Jordan and Mr. Pritchett will continue to act as liaisons to the IPM Advisory Committee. Mr. Weber, Mr. Wilson, Mr. Phillips, and Mr. Klobucher also volunteered to participate in a workshop with staff to prepare the 5-year Water Quality Report. Mr. Pritchett and Mr. Wilson continue to participate in the Lower Mission Creek Flood Control project.

8. STAFF REPORTS

a. Manager's Program Update

Ms. Zachary reported that Tim Burgess has been promoted and Autumn McKee has been hired to fill the Water Resources Specialist positions. She stated that she will be recruiting for the Water Quality Monitoring position.

Ms. Zachary reported the intern program will be expanded to include Integrated Pest Management research.

Ms. Zachary reported that the Community Guide should be available in May. She said that the guide will be mailed to every household within the city and unincorporated county pockets.

Ms. Zachary reported that the Community Forum was held and approximately 75 people attended. She said that the forum was aired on City TV throughout the month. She said that the Steelhead Festival was held at the Santa Barbara Zoo and 400 free passes were distributed and 2,500 – 3,000 people were at the Zoo that day.

Ms. Zachary reported that there is an upcoming site visit to Old Mission Creek Restoration at Bohnett Park and Storm Water Management at West Figueroa project locations. She said that a community meeting regarding the Storm Water Management at West Figueroa will be scheduled in the near future.

Ms. Zachary reported that the Earth Day festival will be held at the County Sunken Garden on Sunday, April 23rd from 10:00 am until 5:30 p.m.

b. Tentative Meeting Agenda

Ms. Zachary reviewed the tentative meeting agenda.

9. ADJOURNMENT

At 8:20 p.m. there being no further business to come before the Committee,

ACTION:

Hochman moved, seconded by Wilson, and passed 8/0 that the meeting be adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Jill E. Zachary
Creek Restoration and Water Quality Improvement
Program Manager